

JAY S. HAMMOND, GOVERNOR

WATER RESOURCES BOARD

323 E. 4TH AVENUE  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501

March 19, 1981

The Honorable Samuel Cotten  
Chairman, House Finance Committee  
Alaska State House of Representatives  
Pouch V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

*Also sent to Senate  
Finance Committee*

Honorable Chairman:

One of the projects of the Department of Natural Resources' budget before you for consideration is membership in the Western States Water Council. This is a new project which would entail an \$18,000 annual membership fee, a capitalization charge that would occur for the first three (3) years and travel to quarterly meetings.

Membership in the Council offers a number of opportunities to Alaska. The Council has a permanent staff that researches problems and issues at the direction of the membership and presents united western positions in Washington, both to Congress and the Administration. During a recent Department of Interior meeting on water resources issues involving Secretary Watt and Western State Governors the Council staff was invited to give the introductory briefing.

Attendance and participation in meetings will enable Alaska to benefit from the wealth of experience in water resources development in the other Western States. Their programs have been in operation since before the turn of the century. The Council itself has been in existence longer than our Water Use Act. Alaska's fledgling programs could learn much from the problems, mistakes and successes that the current members have experienced.

A particular interest of the Western States is the relationship of their programs to the federal government. The Council members keep a watchful eye on anything they feel is an intrusion on states rights and have been effective in this area. In this regard, a litigation repository has been established to monitor federal reserved water rights cases in the West with the objective of allowing the states to pool their knowledge and resources. This should be of great assistance in our push to quantify federal reserved water rights in Alaska.

Most importantly, perhaps, membership in the Western States Water Council will give Alaska an opportunity to educate the other members on our problems and priorities in water resources and related matters. It is obvious that the lower 48 states do not understand what is happening in

Samuel Cotten

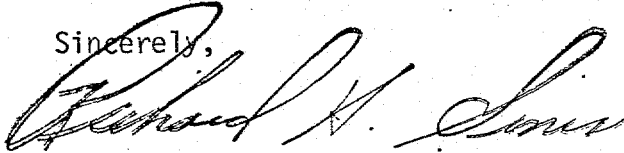
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Alaska. Council membership can be used to acquaint the states most similar to us with Alaska and as a forum to present our concerns on national and regional issues. Membership will make us more a part of the community of Western states and this way we may gain important allies in future resource battles with the federal government.

We strongly urge that you support membership in the Western States Water Council. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard H. Sims".

Richard H. Sims  
Chairman